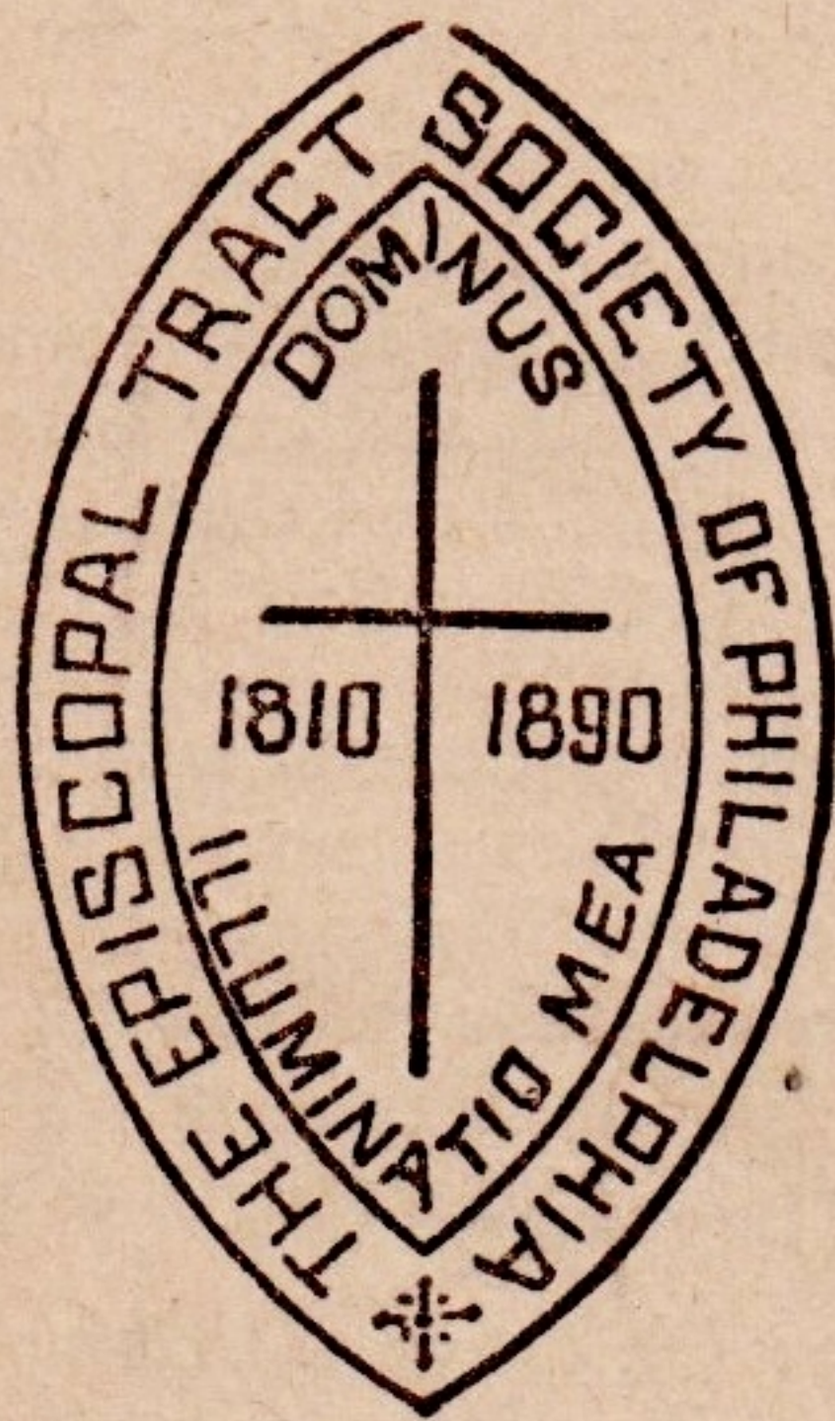
Preparation for Holy Communion

—AND—

Thanksgiving after Receiving.



By Rev. B. B. MATURIN, S. S. J. E.

Price, Two Cents.

HYMN.

And now, O Father, mindful of the love
  That bought us, once for all on Calvary's tree;
And having with us Him that pleads above,
  We here present, we here spread forth to Thee
That only offering perfect in Thine eyes,
The one true, pure immortal Sacrifice.

Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
  And only look on us as found in Him;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
  Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim;
For lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son, our Lord.

And then for those, our dearest and our best,
  By this prevailing Presence we appeal;
Oh fold them closer to Thy mercy's breast,
  Oh do Thine utmost for their soul's true weal,
From tainting mischief keep them white and clear,
And crown Thy gifts with strength to persevere.

And so we come: Oh draw us to Thy feet,
  Most patient Saviour, Who canst love us still;
And by this Food, so awful and so sweet,
  Deliver us from every touch of ill;
In thine own service make us glad and free,
And grant us, never more to part with Thee. Amen.

Preparation for Holy Communion

AND

Thanksgiving after Receiving.

Have a regular time for making your Communion, and keep to it. Give a week to preparation, if you make your Communion monthly. Begin the Sunday night before, adding to your daily prayers one or two more of preparation. If you make it every two weeks, begin the Wednesday before. If once a week, begin the Friday before. Thus you will bring your mind to bear upon it.

Half the reason for so many careless Communions is their irregularity; if you have a rule, your mind will be kept in a more fitting frame.

Your preparation should consist of self-examination, prayer, meditation.

In your examination, take a review of the whole month—ask yourself if you have struggled against some one sin.

Come to your Communion with a resolution against one special fault: for instance, resolve that you will not say one word against that person you dislike so much, and in your nightly examination ask yourself if you have kept your resolution. Take one sin each time.

If you make your Communion weekly, try in the same way to see if you have given way once less often to a certain fault.

Prayer should consist of five acts—an act is putting the soul into a certain frame of mind. You should make acts of faith, hope, love, contrition and desire.

Lord, I believe in Thee, and that Thou art ready to give Thyself to me.

Lord, my hope is even in Thee.

Lord, Thou art Love, and feedest me with Thine own Love.

Lord, I am truly sorry for all my sins.

Lord, I desire with my whole soul to make a good Communion and to struggle against sin.

As to meditation, take on the Saturday before these three questions:—

Who is coming?

To whom does He come?

To do what does He come?

Who? The Physician of souls.

To whom? To one who has for years given way to habits of sin.

To do what? To heal my sin; to set me free.

You may give a different answer each time.

Who is coming? The Saviour Who died for me.

To whom is He coming? To the soul that crucified Him.

To do what? With the Blood from His wounds to heal my sins.

Or, if you are struggling against anger, say—Who is coming? He Who was struck in the face. To whom? To one who cannot bear one trying word or slight. To do what? That He may teach me to be patient.

Take your own sin, whatever it may be, and pause over these three questions. If you will make five or ten minutes' meditation upon them, or if you get to church five minutes earlier, and will think of them instead of saying your prayers, you will realize better that the Lord of power and love is coming to you.

ABOUT THANKSGIVING.

Many who would not dare to make their Communion without careful preparation, do not seem to realize that they have *got something*,

and are not equally careful in their thanksgiving. Your thanksgiving should consist of meditation, prayer to God the Father, prayer to God the Son. In meditation we "feed upon Him," as the Church bids us, "in our hearts," and draw upon our imagination, and memory, to realize all we have received.

In praying to the Father, you turn, like Christ, to speak to your own Father—your Lord is within you; and your desires are His. The moment after your Communion you can turn to God with all the sense of conscious closeness to the Son, accepted in the Beloved. Your prayers will have more strength, more power.

Then pray to Christ Himself, and of this prayer there are three parts—

First, Adoration.

Second, Thanksgiving.

Third, Oblation.

After your Communion bow every power of your soul and worship the Lord Jesus Christ within you. Mind, body, each sense of both, the whole being bowed before Him Who humbled Himself, that He might exalt you.

Picture Jesus upon the throne of your heart and bring to Him one by one all your gifts of

body and soul. Your memory, that He may cleanse it from all evil. Your imagination, that He may purify its stains and images. Your reason, that He may send the light of His truth to lead you. Your body, to suffer or not as He thinks good, to be the instrument of His will. Your time, to use for His service. Your affections, to cling to Him. Bring *all* you have, and offer it with your life as a sacrifice and oblation.

By these thoughts you will develop what you have received, and will realize Who is in your soul. Try to take five or ten minutes in church before you do anything else—try not to walk home with other people, but to keep silent; appropriate all the gifts you have received. Repeat your thanksgiving each day for a week, if your Communion is monthly, to keep the glow of the glorified Presence within you. Say some one prayer of adoration or of oblation for a week. And so you will find you get more than ever before. You will realize the solemnity, and also the fruitfulness of the Sacrament. Do not be so weak or so unwise as to let anything, any trouble, keep you away, or hold you back from Him in Whom is our strength.

PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION.

Psalm 84 or 85.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Our Father, Who art in, etc.

I said, Lord, have mercy upon me:
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.
Turn Thee again, O Lord, at the last.
And be gracious unto Thy servants.
O Lord, let Thy mercy be showed upon us:
As we do put our trust in Thee.
Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness:
And let Thy saints sing with joyfulness.
Lord, cleanse Thou me from my secret faults:
And keep Thy servant also from presumptuous sins.
O Lord, hear my prayer:
And let my crying come unto Thee.

O most merciful God, incline Thy merciful ears to our prayers, and enlighten our hearts by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may worthily approach Thy Holy Mysteries, and love Thee with an everlasting love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let the Comforter which proceedeth from Thee, O Lord, enlighten our minds we beseech Thee, and lead us, as Thy Son hath promised, into all truth; through the same, Thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the power of Thy Holy Spirit be present with us, through Thy mercy to cleanse our hearts, and defend us from all our adversities; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

O God, Who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Lord we beseech Thee, visit and cleanse our consciences, that Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ may, when He cometh, find in us a

dwelling place prepared for Himself, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Almighty, Everlasting God, lo! I approach the Sacrament of Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: I approach, sick, to the Physician of Life; unclean to the fountain of mercy; blind, to the light of eternal brightness; poor and needy, to the Lord of heaven and earth. I pray Thee, therefore, of the abundance of Thy boundless bounty, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to heal my sickness, to wash my defilements, to enlighten my blindness, to enrich my poverty, to clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, with such reverence and humility, such contrition and devotion, such purity and faith, such purpose and intention, as is expedient for the health of my soul. Grant me, I beseech Thee, that I may receive not only the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, but the substance also, and virtue of the Sacrament. O most

gracious God, grant me so to receive the Body of Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which he took of the Virgin Mary, that I may be found worthy to be incorporated into His mystical body, and accounted among His members. O most loving Father, grant unto me that. Whom now I purpose to receive veiled in my pilgrimage, I may at length with unveiled face contemplate forever, even Thy well-beloved Son, Who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God throughout all ages. Amen.

Blessed Jesus, Who art about to come to us Thy unworthy servants in the Blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, prepare our hearts, we beseech Thee, for Thyself. Grant us that repentance for our past sins, that faith in the atonement made for them by Thee upon the cross, that full purpose of amendment of life, that perfect love to Thee and to all men, which shall fit us to receive Thee. Lord, we are not worthy that Thou shouldst come under our roof, much less that we should receive Thee into ourselves; but since Thou didst not disdain to be laid in a manger amidst unclean

beasts, so vouchsafe to enter into our souls and bodies, unclean though they be, through many sins and defilements.

Lord, come to us that Thou mayest cleanse us.

Lord, come to us that Thou mayest heal us.

Lord, come to us that Thou mayest strengthen us.

And grant, that having received Thee, we may never be separated from Thee by our sins, but may continue Thine forever, till we see Thee face to face in Thy heavenly kingdom, where with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Thou livest and reignest ever one God, world without end. Amen.

THANKSGIVING AFTER RECEIVING.

PRAISE THE LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise His holy Name.

2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities;

4 Who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, make thee young and lusty as an eagle.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all them that are oppressed with wrong.

7 He showed His ways unto Moses, His works unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness.

9 He will not always be chiding; neither keepeth He his anger for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses.

11 For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth; so great is His mercy also toward them that fear Him.

12 Look how wide also the east is from the west; so far hath He set our sins from us.

13 Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children; even so is the LORD merciful unto them that fear Him.

14 For He knoweth whereof we are made; He remembereth that we are but dust.

15 The days of man are but as grass; for he flourisheth as a flower of the field.

16 For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the merciful goodness of the LORD endureth for ever and ever upon them that fear Him; and His righteousness upon children's children;

18 Even upon such as keep His covenant, and think upon His commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared His seat in heaven, and His kingdom ruleth over all.

20 O praise the LORD, ye angels of His, ye that excel in strength; ye that fulfill His commandment, and hearken unto the voice of His word.

21 O praise the LORD, all ye His hosts; ye servants of His that do His pleasure.

22 O speak good of the LORD, all ye works of His, in all places of His dominion: Praise thou the LORD, O my soul.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

As it was in the beginning, etc.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us;
But to Thy name give glory.
Lord, hear my prayer;
And let my cry come unto Thee.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favor, and further us with Thy continual help; that in all our works, begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy Holy Name, and finally by Thy mercy obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

I yield Thee thanks, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed, not for any desert of mine, but only out of the condescension of Thy mercy, to feed me a sinner, Thy unworthy servant, with the precious Body and Blood of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and I pray that this Holy Communion, may not bring guilt upon me to condemnation, but may intercede for me to my pardon and salvation; let it be to me an armor of faith, and a shield of good purpose; a riddance of all vices; an extermination of evil desires and longings, an increase of love and patience, of humility and obedience, and all virtues; a firm defence against the wiles of my enemies, visible or invisible; a perfect quieting of all my impulses, fleshly and spiritual; a firm

adherence to Thee, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bring me a sinner to that ineffable Feast, where Thou, with Thy Son and the Holy Spirit, art to Thy Holy ones, true light, full satiety, everlasting joy, pleasure consummated, and perfect happiness, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace: according to Thy word.

For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou has prepared before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles; and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

PRAYERS AND HYMNS.

Lord Jesus, Whom by power divine,
Now hidden 'neath the outward sign,
We worship and adore.
Grant, when the veil away is rolled,
With open face we may behold
Thyself, forevermore.

Act of Contrition.

I desire, O my Lord God, humbly to offer to Thee the sacrifice of a broken, a troubled and a contrite heart. I grieve from my inmost heart that I have ever offended Thee by my sins; Who art so gracious to me, and so oft refreshest me in Thy Blessed Sacrament. I grieve especially for the sins of ——, which Thou knowest, Thou Searher of our hearts, which I do confess in the bitterness of my soul. Would that I had never offended Thee. Yet a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise; Thou, Who for love of us, didst give to us Thine only-begotten Son, to wash us from our sins in His own Blood. Amen.

Resolution of Amendment.

I desire, O Lord, earnestly longing for the help of Thy grace, to renew all my Baptismal vows to Thee, to renounce all that displeaseth Thee, and to walk more perfectly in newness of life. I renounce the devil and all his works, and the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires, all sinful excesses in

things lawful, and whatever may lead my heart from Thee, or hinder my duty towards Thee; also, I renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh, with everything in thought, word, or deed, which displeaseth Thee. From all which, let it be Thy good pleasure to deliver me and to turn the whole stream of my affections to the love of Thee, that Thy will and Thy love may be the sole rule and guide of my life, that I may love whatever Thou lovest, and hate whatever Thou hatest. Amen.

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Act of Faith.

Of a truth, I firmly believe, O Jesus, and with lively faith confess, that Thou Thyself, equal to God the Father in glory and in power, true God and Man, art verily and indeed present in this Sacrament. For Thou Thyself hast said "This is My Body," "This is My Blood." I believe whatever the Son of God hath said; "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

Act of Hope.

O Christ Jesus I am sinful, but Thou callest to Thee them that labor and are heavy laden, that Thou mayest refresh them. Thou art my refuge. To Whom else should I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; Thou alone canst comfort me in every trouble. Therefore, I come to Thee, hoping that this Communion may be to me the increase of Faith, Hope and Charity; a defense against the snares of my enemies; a help to the removal of my faults, and a pledge of future happiness. Amen.

Act of Love.

O Most Sweet Saviour, Jesus Christ, how great was Thy love which drew Thee from the bosom of the Father to this vale of tears, to take our flesh, and endure infinite miseries and wrongs; yea, even the death of the Cross for us miserable sinners. Oh how great was Thy love! Thou mightest have condemned us, and Thou didst rather choose to save us. We were guilty, and Thou, the sinless One, didst endure punishment to set us free.

Out of love it was Thou camest down to take our flesh; and when about to depart from this world to the Father, Thou didst leave to us this Sacrament as a pledge of Thy love; that after a new and wondrous manner, Thou mightest abide with us forever; Thou whose delights are to be with the sons of men.

O God, Thou art very Love! He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in Thee. I desire to receive Thee in this Sacrament, that I may be more firmly united to Thee in the bond of love. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ, my Saviour? Oh that neither life, nor death, nor any other creature may have power to do so! Amen.

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for now Thou hast fed me with Thy body and Thy Blood. For this, Thine infinite goodness, I render Thee hearty thanks, but do not Thou, O my God, I pray Thee, go far from me. Look upon me and help me, for evil thoughts rise up against me day by day, and many temptations make war against me. Grant that I may pass through

them uninjured; grant that I may break through them unharmed. Fight Thou, O Lord, on my side, and drive far from me all assaults of the enemy. Command Thou the winds and storms of my passions; say to the sea, Be still; and to the north wind, Blow not; and there will be a great calm. Bless and sanctify me with Thy heavenly blessing. Protect and preserve the soul of Thy servant amid the many dangers of this life; and Thy grace accompanying me, guide me by the way of peace to the country of eternal brightness. Amen.

Grant, O Lord, that we who are Thy soldiers here may enjoy Thy peace hereafter; that the eyes which have looked upon Thee in thy Sacrament of love may also behold the fruition of Thy blessed hope; that the tongues which have sung Thy praises may also speak the truth; that the feet which have stood in Thy Sanctuary may walk in the land of light; and that the bodies which have feasted on Thy living Body may be restored in newness of life to dwell with Thee where Thou reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the Unity of the Godhead, King for evermore. Amen.

HYMNS.

Jesus! the very thought is sweet!
In that dear Name, all heart joys meet;
But oh, than honey sweeter far
The glimpses of His Presence are.

No word is sung more sweet than this,
No sound is heard more full of bliss,
No thought brings sweeter comfort nigh
Than Jesus, Son of God Most High.

Jesu, the hope of souls forlorn,
How good to them for sin that mourn;
To them that seek Thee, oh how kind!
But what art Thou to them that find!

No tongue of mortal can express,
No pen can write the blessedness,
He only, who hath proved it knows,
What bliss from love of Jesus flows.

O Jesu! King of wondrous might!
O Victor! glorious from the fight!
Sweetness that may not be expressed
And altogether lovliest!

Abide with us, O Lord, to-day,
Fulfill us with thy grace we pray,
And with Thine Own true sweetness feed,
Our souls from sin and darkness freed. Amen.

Jesus; gentlest Saviour,
God of might and power,
Thou Thyself art dwelling
In us at this hour.

Nature cannot hold Thee,
Heaven is all too straight
For Thine endless glory
And Thy royal state.

Out beyond the shining
Of the furthest star,
Thou art ever stretching
Infinitely far.

Yet the hearts of children
Hold what worlds cannot,
And the God of wonders
Loves the lowly spot.

As men to their gardens
Go to seek sweet flowers,
In our hearts, dear Jesus,
Seek them at all hours.

Jesus, gentlest Saviour,
Thou art in us now;
Fill us full of goodness,
Till our hearts o'erflow.

Pray the prayers within us,
That to heaven shall rise;
Sing the song that angels
Sing above the skies.

Multiply our graces,
Chiefly love and fear,
And, dear Lord, the chiefest—
Grace to persevere. Amen.

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face,
  Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand the Eternal Grace,
  And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
  Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
  Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song,
  This the Heavenly Table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting still prolong
  The brief bright hour of fellowship with Thee.

I have no help but Thine; nor do I need
  Another arm save Thine to lean upon;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed;
  My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.

I have no wisdom, save in Him Who is
  My wisdom and my teacher both in one;
No wisdom can I lack while Thou art wise,
  No teaching do I crave, save Thine alone. Amen.